

# Savoonga

## Women Can Lots Of Walrus Meat

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Twenty-five thousand pounds of walrus and one pressure canner! That is about what I was faced with in a trip to Savoonga to teach canning walrus meat.

I went over with a demonstration canner and sealer, and found that the equipment the women had ordered had not arrived. The walrus hunt was very successful but equipment slightly scarce.

A frantic radio call to Nome brought the loan of an additional canner, sealer, and cans from the Lutheran church. The same plane that brought this equipment also brought the equipment ordered by the Savoonga women. This meant we were at least "in business," even though we settled for around 240 pounds of meat to learn the canning process.

Those 240 pounds meant 240 one-pound cans of canned meat in three days, working in a class situation in the school lunch room.

Care was taken in pre-cooking the meat, filling the cans, sealing cans, and in the actual process of canning by use of the pressure canner. We worked slowly enough so that each woman could learn the process and have the experience of using and handling the pressure canner.

Using a pressure canner for the first time is always rather frightening. One is certain it is going to blow up and surprised when it doesn't. Checking the gauge to keep pressure constant, timing the cooking, cooling the cans, checking for perfect sealing, using the tin can sealer—all of these were skills mastered by the group.

By canning walrus in Savoonga we put into motion several things: 1. skill in preserving food during plenty for use during scarcity, 2. a cooking method that will add variety to meals, 3. saving food that might spoil because of warm weather, and 4. the possibility, through skills learned, of canning walrus for sale on a limited market.

This latter of course, would take some additional equipment in the village, and perhaps a community-kitchen type canning center. This type of canning set-up is possible, even without electricity, using sanitary home methods of canning procedure.

Women who took part in the canning workshop were Elsie Kava, Anna Gologergen, Helen Jackson, Rosemond Wongittilin, Judy Stenswick, Theresa Rookook, Dorothy Wahghiyi, Ruth Miklahook, Lila Akeya, Laura Pungowiyi, Della Wahghiyi, Alice Kulowiyi, Ellen Gologergen, Helen Kiyaklook, Mary Ann Wongittilin, Agatha Mokiyyuk, Dorcas Akeya, and Gertrude Toolie.